

**Amendments to the Specification:**

*Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 16, with the following amended paragraph:*

With reference to Fig. 4A, a block diagram of an embodiment of a content exchange portion 116 of the content distribution system 100 is shown. The content exchange 116 caches content objects requested by client computers 112 under the control of the content manager 312. Included in the content exchange 116 are a tracking system 402, and a content node 406. The tracking system includes a content tracker 404, a health check ~~428~~ 426, status information 420, a local content catalog 416, and an origin server database 424 while the content node 406 includes a content controller 408 and a content store 412.

*Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 15, line 24, with the following amended paragraph:*

The health check ~~428~~ 426 can be either a hardware or software application which provides operational characteristics of an associated content exchange 116. In an embodiment, the health check ~~428~~ 426 provides a single indication of content exchange 116 status. The single indication may be a normalized value between zero and one indicating a combination of content exchange characteristics including, for example, a CPU load, a CPU temperature, a number of concurrent connections, and a number of requests a content exchange is facilitating. In an alternate embodiment, the health check ~~428~~ 426 could monitor characteristics of a content exchange 116 while running on another content exchange 116, origin server 108 or location.

*Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 29, line 14, with the following amended paragraph:*

The aforementioned heuristics can be determined using the health check 330, ~~428~~ 426 associated with a particular content exchange 116 or origin server 108. In an embodiment, health check 330, ~~428~~ 426 are software applications running on a content exchange 116 and

origin server 108 respectively. When queried by the viewer object proxy 504, the health check 330, ~~428 426~~ may provide a CPU load, a CPU temperature, a number of concurrent connections, and a number of requests the content exchange 116 or origin server 108 is currently servicing. In some embodiments, viewer object proxy 504 queries the content object exchange 116 via HTTP to retrieve server health check heuristics. It should be noted, however, that one skilled in the art would recognize many mechanisms for accessing server health heuristics including, but not limited to, FTP, NNTP, RTP, RTSP, SHOUT, SMTP, or connecting to the node through a designated port.

*Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 29, line 26, with the following amended paragraph:*

In other embodiments, a request for status by the viewer object proxy 504 to the health check 330, ~~428 426~~ results in a single status indicia being returned. The single status indicia is between one and zero with one indicating poor characteristics and zero indicating good characteristics. Good and poor characteristics are determined based on the ability or capability for a content exchange 116 or other transfer node to act as a content object cache. Thus, in an embodiment, an indicia of 0.9 indicates an inability to maintain a content object local to a content exchange 116 for an extended time. Alternatively, an indicia of 0.2 indicates an ability to maintain a content object for an extended time.